

Introduced by Senator Vincent

June 10, 2003

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 37—Relative to Juneteenth.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 37, as introduced, Vincent. Juneteenth: June 19.

This measure would recognize June 19, 2003, as Juneteenth and would urge the people of California to join in celebrating Juneteenth as a day to honor and reflect on the significant role that African-Americans have played in the history of the United States and how they have enriched society through their steadfast commitment to promoting brotherhood and equality.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the strong survival
2 instinct of African-Americans who were first brought to this
3 country stacked in the bottom of slave ships in a month-long
4 journey across the Atlantic Ocean known as the “Middle
5 Passage”; and

6 WHEREAS, Events in the history of the United States that led
7 to the start of the Civil War in 1861 centered on sectional
8 differences between the North and the South that were based on the
9 economic and social divergence caused by the existence of
10 slavery; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1862, the first clear signs that the end of slavery
12 was imminent appeared when laws abolishing slavery were
13 adopted in the territories of Oklahoma, Nebraska, Colorado, and
14 New Mexico; and

1 WHEREAS, In September 1862, President Lincoln issued the
2 celebrated Emancipation Proclamation, warning the rebellious
3 Confederate states that he would declare their slaves “forever
4 free” if those states did not return to the Union by January 1, 1863;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, Enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation
7 occurred only in Confederate states that were under Union Army
8 control; and

9 WHEREAS, On January 31, 1865, Congress passed the
10 Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution,
11 abolishing slavery throughout the United States and its territories;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, Spontaneous celebration erupted throughout the
14 country when African-Americans learned of their freedom; and

15 WHEREAS, Juneteenth, or June 19, 1865, is considered the
16 date when the last slaves in America were freed when General
17 Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas, and issued General
18 Order No. 3, almost two and one-half years after President Lincoln
19 issued the Emancipation Proclamation; and

20 WHEREAS, Observance of Juneteenth, a reminder of
21 emancipation, spread from Texas to the neighboring states of
22 Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, as well as Alabama, Florida,
23 and California, where many African-American Texans migrated;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, Juneteenth symbolizes freedom, celebrates the
26 abolishment of slavery, and reminds all Americans of the
27 significant contributions of African-Americans to our society; and

28 WHEREAS, Juneteenth celebrations are a tribute to those
29 African-Americans who fought so long and worked so hard to
30 make the dream of equality a reality; now, therefore, be it

31 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
32 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature of the State of California
33 urges the people of California to join in celebrating Juneteenth, or
34 June 19, 2003, as a day to honor and reflect on the significant role
35 that African-Americans have played in the history of the United
36 States and how they have enriched society through their steadfast
37 commitment to promoting brotherhood and equality; and be it
38 further.

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
- 2 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

O

